

NEWS RELEASE

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**WILDLAND FIRE IN THE URBAN INTERFACE
– AN INCREASING THREAT**

**Citizens Reorganize Government Committee Into Non Profit Organization
To Help Communities Protect Themselves**

(Salt Lake City) - It began more than a decade ago as a coalition of government agencies seeking to increase public awareness of the dangers of wildland fire to homes and communities in the urban interface. The Utah Living With Fire committee has now assumed a new form as a citizen managed non-profit organization with the objective of providing aid to Utah communities that face the threat of wildland fire.

“This is a major milestone in our efforts to help Utah’s communities protect themselves from wildland fire,” said Utah State Forester Joel Frandsen. “As evidenced by recent fires on Salt Lake’s east bench and near Brigham City, wildland fire in the urban interface is a growing problem and this new Utah Living With Fire committee is made up of people who live in the urban interface and have taken the necessary steps to protect their communities and are ready to help others do the same.”

The urban interface is defined as those areas where homes or communities intermingle with undeveloped wildland prone to fire. In Utah more than 600 communities have been identified as urban interface areas.

“Federal, state and local agencies are anxious to provide expertise as well as financial aid,” said Jim Craghead, president of Utah Living With Fire. “But, communities must take some necessary first steps and our committee can help them organize and take action to be eligible for government help.”

Craghead speaks from the experience of being a homeowner and resident of the Summit County community of Pinebrook. He was a key motivator in that community’s efforts to create a community fire plan and take preparatory measures against the possibility of wildland fire.

The Utah Living With Fire committee works closely with federal and state agencies that implement the National Fire Plan. That program is a multi-agency effort designed to involve homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in the effort to protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire - before a fire starts. The approach emphasizes community responsibility for planning in the design of a safe community as well as effective emergency response, and individual responsibility for safer home construction and design, landscaping, and maintenance.

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